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FILE PICTURE

MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION FOR BORDER ROW WITH CHINA: MEA

During Sunday's talks, India and China agreed to stay in close contact and work out a resolution of the remaining issues in eastern Ladakh, MEA said

'TWO SIDES HAD FRANK, IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION'

A statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs on Monday said the two sides had a 'frank and in-depth' discussion on the resolution of the relevant issues along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector. "Two sides agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels," the MEA said. The government refers to eastern Ladakh as Western Sector

TO MAINTAIN STABILITY ON THE GROUND

- The MEA said both sides agreed to maintain security and stability on the ground during the 18th India-China Corps Commander level talks held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side on Sunday
- The talks were held days ahead of Chinese defence minister Li Shangfu's visit to India to attend a meeting of the SCO on April 27-28

Dec 2022

WHEN THE LAST INDIA-CHINA MEETING AT THE CORPS COMMANDER LEVEL WAS HELD

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

THREAT TO MONUMENTS

Frequent fires near Vijaya Vittala temple in Hampi have become a cause for concern. A fire that broke out on Sunday destroyed the vegetation near the temple complex. Residents of Hampi blamed tourists for the fire and demanded that the authorities tighten security at the World Heritage Site | EXPRESS

EVACUATION OF INDIANS STUCK IN SUDAN BEGINS

Navy ship, IAF planes on standby at Port Sudan and Jeddah

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE evacuation of Indians from strife-torn Sudan got underway on Monday with about 500 nationals reaching Port Sudan, where Indian Navy ship INS Sumedha is docked.

Called Operation Kaveri, it also involves airlifting of Indians who reach Jeddah, the Saudi Arabian port city, from Sudan. Two IAF planes are parked in Jeddah for the evacuation.

"Operation Kaveri gets under way to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan and some more are on their way," External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar tweeted. "Our ships and aircraft are set to bring them back home," he added.

Five other Indians were evacuated by France. It sent two military aircraft and evacuated 388 people from 28 countries, including India, the French Embassy in Delhi said.

Some Indians have been evacuated by the US, too. Most of them need to be brought back home. India is in touch with the UN, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and the US for help. "Crossing over the Red Sea into Jeddah is one option India is considering from where they can board the aircraft and fly to India," sources said.

Nearly 3,000 Indian nationals are stranded in Sudan. "Our embassy in Khartoum is in regular touch with the stranded Indians and is advising them on the viability of safe movement and the need to avoid unneccassary risk. It is also coordinating all possible assistance including possible exit from Khartoum city as and when the security situation permits safe movement," the MEA said.

Indian nationals at Port Sudan ahead of their evacuation on Monday | TWITTER

Operation Kaveri gets under way to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan and some more are on their way

— Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister

Modi, Yogi, Bommai to launch BJP's special poll blitz in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BJP's central and state leaders are all set to launch the party's two-day "Vishesha Mahaprachara Abhiyana" (special campaign) in all 224 Assembly constituencies on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with 98 central and 150 state leaders, including Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and former CM BS Yediyurappa, will take part in the campaign, BJP state president Nalin Kumar Kateel told reporters here on Monday.

As part of the campaign, leaders will hold roadshows, meetings, door-to-door visits and other events. They will also interact with local leaders, including from various communities, beneficiaries of government welfare schemes and programmes and visit temples and mutts.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda have already launched their campaign. Last month, BJP organised a "Booth Vijaya" campaign in which party workers highlighted the development projects implemented by the state and union governments. Now, they will reach out to voters with an appeal to vote for the candidates of the party. "We aim at winning 150 seats," he said.

Union minister Shobha Karandlaje said the party leaders and workers will also visit the colonies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and speak about the changed reservation policy of the BJP government in the state. Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adithyanath will tour coastal Karnataka, Kittur Karnataka and Kalyan Karnataka regions for four days. Shah will campaign in 35 to 40 constituencies. Union ministers Smrithi Irani, Dharmendra Pradhan, Nirmala Sitharaman, Mansukh Mandavya and others will also campaign.

Slamming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Karandlaje said, "He speaks about poverty, but doesn't know what it is. Despite ruling the country for 60 years, the Congress could not eradicate poverty."

ASSEMBLY POLLS 2023 DECIDE

'Congmen abducted me, forced to withdraw papers'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

JDS candidate for Mangaluru seat Altaf Kumpala on Monday alleged that some Congress workers forced him to withdraw his nomination papers after kidnapping him.

Addressing reporters here, Altaf alleged that he was picked up by supporters of Congress candidate UT Khader.

"As I was leaving a local mosque after offering namaz last Friday, Congress workers Mustafa and Usman kidnapped me and made me sign papers. I have not withdrawn my papers, but was forced to do so. I have urged the Mangaluru police to provide protection to me and my family. I have written to the EC to allow me to contest. But my application has been rejected," he said.

Meanwhile, Sadashiva Ullal, Ullal Block Congress president, refuted the allegations of JDS and said no Congress worker abducted or threatened Altaf to withdraw his papers.

"It is an attempt to tarnish the image of Khader. The persons whom Altaf accused of kidnapping him are his childhood friends. After keeping quiet for two days, he is now making baseless allegations. Denial of tickets to some seniors led to bickering in JDS and Altaf withdrew papers after reaching a pact," he said.

Altaf Kumpala (centre)

THUNDERSHOWERS LIKELY IN B'LURU

Some isolated places in Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts may receive thundershowers for the next five days IPS

Deal done on using Russian fin messaging system

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

IN a landmark deal signed by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov last week, both sides agreed to adopt the Russian financial messaging system — Service Bureau of Financial Messaging System of the Bank of Russia (SPFS) — for cross-border payments.

Another key element of the agreement signed on April 18 during Manturov's visit to India, is to allow acceptance of Indian Ru-Pay cards and India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in Russia, and the Russian MIR cards and its Fast Payments System (FPS) in India.

With this, the two countries will be able to resolve most of their pending payment issues.

Top banking and finance officials from the two countries are working out the details to use these instruments to settle cross-border payments effectively. According to sources, India's central bank — Reserve Bank of India — has set up a multi-disciplinary working group to implement it.

India and Russia have already agreed to settle payments through Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA). The April 18 pact clarified that Russia can use the surplus Indian rupees to conduct other businesses in India or remit back to Russia.

As for SPFS, it is a financial messaging system that works on the same lines as the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), the international payment system used by thousands of financial institutions to transfer funds worldwide. After Russia invaded Ukraine, the EU and other Western countries removed top Russian banks from the SWIFT network.

Russia had been asking India to use SPFS. It developed SPFS after it was threatened with expulsion from SWIFT when it annexed Crimea in 2014.

Protesting wrestlers move Supreme Court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AFTER spending Sunday night on the footpath of Jantar Mantar here, the country's top wrestlers — Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat — approached the Supreme Court seeking direction to Delhi Police to lodge an FIR against Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The wrestlers said it's been three days since they filed a police complaint of sexual harassment against Singh. The plea was mentioned by senior advocate Narendra Hooda before a bench of CJI D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha but since it wasn't part of the listed items, the CJI asked him to mention it on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a senior police official said they have sought the sports ministry's oversight panel's report to begin probe. "We have received seven complaints and are conducting an inquiry into all of them. We will register an FIR once concrete evidence is obtained," a senior official said. The sports ministry asked IOA to form an ad hoc panel to manage WFI. P15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a roadshow organised on the sidelines of Yuvam - 2023 Conclave in Kochi on Monday | ASAMESH

NO PRICKLY ISSUES IN MODI-BISHOPS MEET

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

TAKING the BJP's Christian outreach programme in Kerala to the next level, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met the heads of eight Christian denominations in the state.

BJP state chief K Surendran, who was present at the meeting held at Hotel Taj Malabar in Kochi, said the discussion was very cordial and the bishops shared their views on the state's development.

Although they were expected to raise attacks on Christian institutions in north India, sources said no controversial topics came up for discussion.

The Church priests who met the PM included Syro-Malabar Church Major Archbishop Cardinal Mar George Alencherry and Arch Bishop of Verapoly Latin Catholic Church Joseph Joy Kalathiparambil, among others.

Speaking at another event earlier in the day, Modi said Kerala will support the BJP's development agenda the way Christian-majority northeastern states and Goa have.

MBE for Sanskrit scholar Dr Nandakumara

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

DR MATTUR NANDAKUMARA, who hails from Sanskrit-speaking Mattur village in Shivamogga district, will be honoured with the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) under the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (Civil Division). This is one of the honorary British awards given to foreign nationals.

A prolific Sanskrit scholar and teacher, Dr Nandakumara is currently heading the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London. According to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Dr Nandakumara has been chosen for the award for his contribution to teaching, accessibility and performance of Indian classical arts in the UK.

Dr Nandakumara started his career as a teacher in a local high school, following which he pursued his Ph D at the University of London. Before this, he obtained a master's degree in Sanskrit from the University of Mysore.

Dr Nandakumara has been working towards encouraging Indian culture and arts in the UK for the last 40 years, especially through the efforts of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, which is the largest Indian organisation towards the promotion of arts outside of India.

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